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THOUGHTS
IN VERSE



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"Where boughs o'erwave and pebbly streamlet sings.

[See Conclusion]

THOUGHTS IN VERSE.

33
By M. P. SANBURN. "



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THOUGHTS IN VERSE.

THE WILDWOOD BIRD*

Man mars the beauties Nature made;
His grasping, *utilizing* hand
Obstructs the streams, disrobes the shade,
And belts the land with iron band.

Ere lock or dam obscured its sheen,
Kentucky's river flowing free,
Mirrored full many a varied scene
Of dale and cliff and towering tree,
And smiled, at evening's truthful hour,
As youths and maidens whispering nigh
Enrapt by love's transporting power,
Forgot all else of earth and sky;
And it has blushed shame's crimson glow
From hell-born war's polluting freight,
As murdered friend and murdering foe
Sank deeply down in endless hate.

[Pieces marked with * have before been published, some of which are in part now modified.]

Not *now* on love nor hate to dwell,
This old man's rhyming memory dream,
Tho' both his heart has known full well ;
A simple *bird* is all the theme.

What *time* the glowing prime of gorgeous June
Adorns the northern woodnymph's bower,
When all her airy choirs attune
Harmonious praise to Nature's power ;
Within a dell, where rock and tree
Softens the sun's meridian look ;
Where idling Echo loves to be,
Repeating warbling bird and brook ;
'Twas *then*, 'twas *there*, the tiny thing
First felt its partial parents' care ;
Sole nestling 'neath their mutual wing,
Their doting age esteemed it fair.
Brief joy ! From unseen archer's bow
Two fatal shafts fast following flew,
And forced their young full soon to go
Guideless where strange was every view.
Unfriended then it wandered lone
The wildwood waste, a *wildwood bird*,
In culture's trim demesne unknown,
Tho' some chance woodman may have heard.
Yet oft a lambent brightness fills
Its musing midnight's brambly bower,
And strange ethereal music thrills
With ecstasy its dreaming hour :
'Tis *not* the moon's reflected splendor
On the near streamlet's wavy flow ;
'Tis *not* the greetings, gayly tender,
Of dawn's sweet voices, warbling low.

* * * * *

Thus, still mid Summer's softening scene,
 Abundant board and balmy air,
 It well may rove the glenwood green,
 Devote to song, devoid of care :
 But when bleak Winter clouds the sun
 And sheets with snow its sylvan home,
 And beam or shelter there be none,
 Where shall the shiftless songster roam ?
 If, hunger-driven and icy wind,
 It seek some churlish dullard's door,
 What crumb or comfort hope to find
 With only song to pay the score ?
 Song neither clothes his shivering brood,
 Absolves his urgent landlord's fee,
 Nor soothes his ill shrew's murmuring mood—
 For aught so useless use hath he !

'Twere vainer yet on wearied wing
 Exploring Fashion's sumptuous stage ;
 There alien warblers softly sing
 Sweet nonsense in their gilded cage.
 Wild freedom's bird, dream not of there !
 Back to the desolated dell
 Thy faint flight take ; there yield despair
 Thy last sad note, thy long farewell.
 Perchance some Red-breast, nor'ward hieing,
 Precursor of the vernal train,
 May pause, thy snow-shroud corse espying
 To chant a friendly funeral strain :—
 "What here neglected lies, this wreck,
 These scenes, that late so gladly met,
 Before the vernant sisters deck

Their bare estate, will quite forget:
Yet well it joyed their Summer pride
 Of cliff and stream and grassy glade,
And lofty forests waving wide
 Their dense domain of dreamy shade.
For milder scenes and seasons meant,
 Such flight its feeble plumes denied;
To adverse storms it meekly bent,
 Desponding, drooped its wing, and died.
Yet, lost for aye aught good or fair?
 Who knows but He, the Sire of all,
May some bright heaven for birds prepare?
 He notes the little sparrow fall!

“Thy flight is done, thy welcome won
 Where want and winter vex no more:
Then, lorn one, rest! a phantom guest
 Mid vanished scenes of ghostly yore.

These poor remains, ye kites, forbear!
 Your critic beaks, dissective, stay,
And seek some more substantial fare—
 No eagle deigns such petty prey!”

1867.

THOUGHTS IN VERSE.

CEDORAS

Harp of the lone, that long hast lain
 Silent, once more thy voice resume ;
Respond the heart's enduring pain
 For early love's untimely doom ;
Then by the melancholy deep
 In cypress shade forever sleep.

As, near four hundred years ago,
 Columbus from this site renowned *
At first beheld the torrid glow
 Lead Eve to Edens newly found,
Beheld the West the heavenly guest
 Embrace with balmy airs entrancing,
And o'er the main her bridal train
 Advance with sparkling footsteps dancing :
As on that world-ennobling day
 The parting sun with softened ray
Serenes *Havana's* ample bay ;
But now his rays the high spire gild
 Of many a huge and haughty dome,
That pride and superstition build
 Where then the Cuban chieftain's home.

* A few hundred yards inward from the entrance of the bay, or harbor, on the south side, Columbus first landed, and, at a short distance from the water, devoutly kneeling, returned thanks to God. The site is in the Governor's square, near the monument—tomb?—of Columbus.

He with his shell-adornèd love
Free roamed his bread-bestowing grove,
More blest, perhaps, in mind and heart,
More nobly played his destined part,
Than sovereign schooled by polished art.
That chieftain, from his grove-clad shore,
With all his race, forevermore
Has perished; none the doom deplore:
For Mammon with a superb smile
Bade splendid cities gem the Isle,
Bade Art and Commerce gild each scene
With luxury's alluring mien.
And well obeyed was that behest,
As many a villa, vista fair,
Princely estate and grand parterre,
Exquisite taste to nature wed,
From main to mountain top outspread
In wondrous beauty, now attest,
Charming the beholder.

—

Time shall be,
When, from its mountains to the sea,
Each stately work of treasured art,
The scenes we love to gaze upon,
With all that glads the gentle heart,
Must fade, must fall, forever gone,
And not a vestige wreck remain
On sun-crowned height or sea-girt plain.
Thus, man! thou and thy works decay;
Be wise, then, well enjoy *to-day*.
What though on high historic stone
To many an eye thy name make known?
A few brief ages, and around
The crumbling fragments strew the ground.

Why then ambition's generous fire,
Sesostris' scepter, Homer's lyre ?
Consuming blight shall blank the whole,
The hero's empire, sage's scroll,
Till, sole 'mid Earth's enshrouding gloom,
Oblivion leans on Ruin's tomb.
Palace and page all past away,
What shall imperial conquest sway ?
Where shall adorning genius stray ?
Both pride and fear aspire to fly
Where pure immortals never sigh :
Eternity, they fondly say,
May not behold that spark decay,
Which, kindled by the breath of God,
From Earth's probationary clod
In rapture to the Sire returns,
Or midst eternal torment burns.
And so let pride and fear presume
That worlds await beyond the tomb ;
That, bright ethereal realms to range
With seraphs ; *this*, to dread the change
Which drags down to the Fiend's domain,
Where sin unpardoned writhes in pain ;
Yet timely penitence shall find
That rest atoning Love designed.
This much, at least, is daily shown,
That, though but little yet is known
Authentic of the future state—
Profoundest theme that men debate,
 Insolvable till death they meet,—
If none but souls that never stray
Find entrance where the blessed stay,
 Then those fair regions pure, replete

With blissful life in endless course,
Will not be thronged from human source.

With undulatory arching high
Yon bold gulf from the bending sky
Clasps the sun ; Spain's proud ensign furls
 On all her frowning works of war,
As the huge gun of sunset hurls
 Its thunder far o'er coral bar.
List ! from each gray cathedral round
The bells to vesper worship sound,
Till distant with departing day
There soulful music melts away.

Forth from the harbor slowly glides
A bark to breast the broadening tides ;
The Moro* passed, her course to lay,
She points her bounding beak afar
To lands toward the Arctic star.
But half her flying force is spread ;
Now half of that, reversed, has fled,
As, heading to the murmuring beach,
She pauses short of cannon reach :
As yet, no loosened anchor's rush
Disturbs the deepening twilight hush,
Which argues but a brief delay
Ere she resume her onward way.
Consentive breeze and starry night
Forth to the swift gulf stream invite,
Propitious to her homeward flight,
Then why on yonder soil is seen
Dull hesitation's doubtful mein ?

* Moro cast'e, at entrance of Harbor.

So richly laden, she may fear
Encounter of the buccaneer;—
That vulture of West Indian seas,*
Black "Seahawk," eyried at Belize.
Tho' fleeter sail than "Caroline"
Flits not o'er billowy fields of brine,
Well might she fear to risk the blow
Of such a ne'er relenting foe,
And bide beneath the castle guns
Until the morning gives the sun's
Protective eye, before whose view
Vanish like sprites the pirate crew.
But not the fear of buccaneer
Has caused her faltering seaward course;
Her smaller boat, now launched afloat,
Rocks waiting—nerved with hardy force,
Each resting on his ready oar—
The sign to make the dusking shore.

Reclining in the portico
That looks toward departing day,
While the day flowers enfold their hues,
And flowers of night begin to blow,
Reclining there, as if to muse
Sweet Hesper's softening hour away,
In earnest attitude is seen
Eudora, rich as ripe eighteen
In bloom of virgin loveliness;
As your ideal's faultlessness,
So winningly endowed is she,
And of ennobled ancestry.
Yet what avail the faultless face

* At the time infested by pirates.

And form, and movement full of grace,
The shapely brow and sparkling eye,
The regal state and lineage high,
Ah, what availeth all of these,
Tho' well the gazing crowd they please,
If crowning all we do not find
The lovelier charms of heart and mind?
As is some specious sunlit shore,
Profuse of semblant fruit and flower.
Where fadeless Spring with balmy breath
Would seem to win his prey from Death,
Forbidding time or toil to trace
A furrow in the smiling face;
Yet where no goodly life may dwell
Among its scenes so fair, yet fell;
Where pilgrim foot has never trod.
Nor anthem rose to nature's God;
A lifeless land of barren bloom,
Or fruitage of the Dead Sea doom;
A fiendish blank in Universe,
Deception's pageant, all perverse;
Such is the highborn form and fair
If Christian virtues reign not there:
Yet these bestow transcendent worth
On poor estate and humble birth,
And through the plainest features shine
With fadeless beauty's ray divine.
But thou, *Eudora*, fair refined,
Lily of beauty, soul of mind,
What trancing thoughts pervade thee now,
What warm emotion tints thy brow?
That sacred gem, so often pressed
Unto thy frequent sighing breast;

Thy lips, that seem to whisper love,
And eyes, now earth bent, now above,
More than devotion these express,
More than the vesper tenderness
The heart-pearls in thine eyes confess.

EUDORA.

This is the destinated hour
That final leads my Carlos here,
With whom I soon forsake the bower
And friends of native home, most dear ;
In silence loved, in secret wed,
And, soon 'twill be, in darkness fled.
Ah, well I knew my brother's pride
Would brook not to be thus allied,
Would sternly bade my Charles depart,
Or plunged a poinard in his heart.
Yet I can scarce this parting will ;
Tho' rash, he is my brother still ;
And though at times he seems austere,
His heart is kind as pity's tear.
Poor heart ! so true to Isabel,
His long betrothed, who darkly fell,
Snared in a soft seductive hour,
While prudence slept, in passion's bower,
Whom his swift vengeance could not save
From a sorrowing self-sought grave
Unblest—peace to the shrouding wave !
Nor bring oblivion of a love
Seraphs themselves might well approve,
Confiding, loyal, chaste, refined,
Almost too high for human kind.
Then would not he, whose heart enshrines

Love's fragrance, though the flower entwines
No longer there, would he not bless
Our union were we to confess ?
Ah, pride, unreasoning pride might steel
His heart against our hearts' appeal :
So slight the hope, the doubt so great,
To risk it were provoking fate.
Then go I must, whate'er betide ;
Love leads away, and I confide,
To Charles my peace, to God my fate ;
'Tis now too late to hesitate,
Which do I not,—he comes ; I hear
His step ; O, heart, thy lord is near !

CHARLES.

Dearest ! thy looks confess thou'rt sad ;
I deemed this hour would find thee glad.
Yet 'tis not strange if thou dost grieve,
Thy cherished home and friends to leave ;
Such fond regrets are justly due
In farewell to the loved and true ;
But know, with whom thou fliest will be
More than left home and friends to thee !

EUDORA.

Dear Carlos, no distrust can I
Of his pledged faith with whom I fly :
Risking the future's bliss or blame,
All have I given for thy dear name,
And at the sacred altar shown
That I am thine, am all thine own !
Yet hear : Some mystic spell at night

Hath power on human soul to write
Its future anguish or delight.
To me in last night's slumber came
That ancestor from whom our name.
Dim was his look—as in eclipse
The sun—yet on his curving lips
Were scorn and wrath ; continuous then
Advanced a march of mighty men ;
Not equal were they to that chief,
Less grand their glories, and more brief.
All silently, but nearer, each
Came, passing almost in my reach,
Till, closing in the ghostly rear,
My late-hearsed father frowned severe.
In sullen dignity then stood
The visionary brotherhood,
Each with averted, angry look,
And hand t'ward me denouncing shook.
I would have spoken then, to know
Why thus to me their censure show,
But at my faint essay each shade
Did point to an ensanguined blade
Gleaming in a late spectre's hand,
Near which another shade did stand,
And a fresh streaming wound undrest
Dyed with a dismal stain each breast.
Then soon each recent shade a place
Assumed with that presential race,
My gaze attracted to each face
Till plain the features grew, and I,
At last in shrieking agony,
That the heart-chilling vision broke,
With dread presentiment awoke.

But long the vanished scene did seem
Too sternly real for a dream ;
Nor till broad morning brightly shone
Could I believe my self alone ;
Alone not even then ; around
Me still the grim phantasma frowned.
Nor could the thought, supremely sweet,
That soon at Hynien's fane we'd meet,
Nor yet that consummative hour,
With all the rite's impressive power,
As hand in hand with thee I knelt,
While the grey father's were outspread
In benediction on each head,
Not all could chase the gloom I felt ;
Still near the haunting kindred kept,
And—thou didst note how then I wept ?

CHARLES.

I did, nor could the cause divine,
For well I knew thy heart was mine.
My own Eudora, do not let
Such sadness haunt thy soul—forget !
Think of those far, inviting bowers,
Where thou, amid their fairest flowers,
Wilt far outvie the queen of May ;
Come—with the wings of love, away !

EUDORA.

I go. Nor do I fear, when o'er
The sea I'm on a stranger shore,
That thou wilt there a stranger be,
Inconstant prove, or cold to me.

Tho's said those maidens charm the view,
With sunny tresses, azure eye,
Cheeks of the sweet pink's changeful hue,
Lips whence young loves to conquest fly,
Brows beamy with a mental light,
Forms where the graces all unite;
And I have heard they far excel
In weaving love's bewitching spell.

CHARLES.

And have you heard their love is brief,
Fleets ere their summer's fading leaf?
Mere beauty's like morn's flaunting flower,
That purpled pleasure of an hour;
Bedecked by momentary gem,
It scorns the humble blooms beneath;
Vain of its swift-ascending stem,
That clasps the corn with spiral wreath;
But when the exalted sunbeams fling
Pervading heat on field and grove,
Before the bee's capricious wing
Through half the expanded sweets can rove,
Shrinking from the bright glare of day,
The *Morning-glory* wilts away,
Veils her frail face, and bows her head,
Humbled; nor can her withered wreath
One fragrant farewell sigh bequeath
As a memento of the dead.
Such is elusive beauty's dower—
Frail favorite of a fickle hour!
So pines she in forsaken bower,
While but a melancholy wreck

Remains of features once so fair,
Beyond modistic skill to deck,
The prey of petulant despair.

EUDORA.

'Tis true; and warns that we should not
For perishable gifts neglect
Enduring charms by virtue brought,
Insuring age from disrespect.
But thou of woman's love did speak
As though 'twere volatile and weak—
Skeptic! No language may express
Her love's entire devotedness.
Nor say, that only where the rose,
Love's garlandry, perpetual blows,
Say not that only there abides
The female heart to love devote:
I know, that where bleak Winter chides
Approaching Spring with surliest note,
That there her deeds her truth approve,
I'm sure—for woman's life is love.

CHARLES.

Well has thy advocacy told
Of greater worth than gems and gold,
And I no skeptic shall appear
In this—the pleader is sincere.
But hist! some one observes.

EUDORA.

'Tis he,
I fear, whom now we should not see.

CHARLES.

Then haste ! The sea swift Caroline
Awaits to waft thee, lady mine !
And wind and wave and veiling night
Combine to bid and bless our flight.

Alarmed, they now with wary speed
Depart, and to the street proceed :
Eudora turns a lingering view
To the old home, and sighs adieu,
As to her heart affectingly
Appeals full many a memory.

Dusky their way. Grim Mora's height
Emits a weird revolving light.
Dark the Puenta.* Dim and afar
At intervals is seen a star,
As clouds invasive of the sky
Portend the tropic tempest nigh,—

As sudden springing on the bay
As tree-couched panthress on her prey :
Yet seaward still the lovers fly.
With silent steps that fleetly fall
They near the Puenta's warlike wall,
And near beyond for them await
A boat, four mariners, and mate.
Soon on the channeled coral tread
The hastening pair with less'ning dread,

*Fortification opposite the Moro.

For a few paces more will free
 Them from pursuit, if such there be ;
 And bolder now the mutual breast
 Expanding thrills, so nearly blest.

Like adder roused by heedless tread,
 Or venom'd arrow ambush sped,
 So, rushing from the treach'rous rock,

A direly daring form is seen
 Assailing Charles with eager shock ;

Eudora, shrieking, springs between,—
 “ Hold! spare him—brother, dread Miguel !
 His wife am I—Oh do not kill ! ”

Vainly ! The frantic steel has gone
 To her devoted breast alone ;
 As instantly the bridegroom's hand
 Strikes down the brother to the strand,
 Then clasps his fainting, falling bride,
 Striving to stay life's gushing tide.
 Sad darkness shrouds the scene of crime,
 And all is hushed a little time,
 Till he, whose fury none would spare,
 In bitterness upbraids the pair :

MIGUEL.

And ye are married ? Still too fast,
 Yet all too slow—as in the past—
 Have I been ! At the portico
 I heard ye when prepared to go,
 Thus gathered your intent, no more,
 But hastened hither to the shore,
 Because I would not shame our place
 By blood of guest—too much disgrace !
 Degraded sister ! last and least

Of an illustrious line deceased,
Thy claim to ruth were small, had hand
Other than mine impelled the brand,
For thee not meant, but one who now
Had else released thee from thy vow,
Most unadvised, that would have wrought
Shame with our honored name, and brought
Thyself to share a vagrant's lot.

O thou injurious foreigner,
Vain freedom-boaster, base-whelped cur,
The meanest minion of a king
Compared to thee's a noble thing !
I hate thee and thy restless race
Impertinent and void of grace,
Of ideas few and ill defined,
Poor products of a meager mind
Dwarfed down, confined within a clod,
By gross selflove, the groveler's god :
Sprung from the spite of Europe's worst
Apostate heretics accurst,
To savage regions self-expelled,
Where soon they peevishly rebelled,
Their factions by fresh forces swelled
Of such as loathe all discipline,
Whether it be of God or men ;
Hence, left their projects to pursue,
Their pert republic sprang to view,—
A polity where millions moil
While demagogues divide the spoil,
That boasts its broad democracy
While scheming aristocracy.
Such government must soon decay
And fall, some Cæsar's facile prey ;

For freedom will not long remain
To guard the land whose god is gain,
Where soul-seducing lust of gold
Begets the baseness to be sold.

But *thou!* though far from reprobate,
I hate thee with such ravenous hate
As all thy blood would fail to sate ;
Not for thy blow—I could admire
Thy promptitude—but thy desire
To blend ignoble blood and name
With old Castile's of laureled fame.

CHARLES.

My country grandly stands alone,
The dread of every tottering throne ;
She makes the cause of man, her cause,
And, by her just and liberal laws,
The good from every region draws ;
Vast in resource, by union strong,
She gives no insult, brooks no wrong.

But *I* am wronged, thou son of pride !
More wronged is she who bleeds beside,
Whom I espoused but for her own
Pure, peerless self, and that alone.

I little value wealth or fame
When won, as oft, by deeds of blame,
And less the insolence of birth,
That arrogance of others' worth :
Intrinsic worth ennobles, not
Illustrious line nor lordly lot :
But strip their gilded state away,
Some kings might prove of common clay
As any varlet whom they sway :

As noble hands have reaped the field
As any sword or scepter wield,
And honor points to many a man
Whose life in labor's hut began,
For well the toilers still retain
The generous heart, ingenious brain.

MIGUEL.

Yet even then 'tis *blood* gives tone,
Which may have slept awhile unknown,
Till circumstance and innate fire
Aroused to deeds that men admire.
No streams flow upward from their founts,
No scoundrel's son to glory mounts ;
From ostrich egg no eaglet springs,
Though incubate 'neath eagle wings ;
Eagle mates eagle, not with hawk ;
No prince should spouse of subject stock,
Nor simple plowman wish to wed
With gentle maiden city bred—
As if some spriteful bird of song
Could quit the sunny garden throng,
To mate the tiresome whipporwill
In lonesome forests, dim and chill !
Each should observe his proper place
Of station, aptitude, and race.
Thus have I reasoned oft before
In converse by the breezy shore,
When convalescence led thy feet
To seek that orange-shaded seat,
Where thou didst love to lean, and view
Thy peoples' pennons swarm the blue—
Mere merchantmen, of sordid strain,

Roaming the world in quest of gain,
As cormorants infest the main.

Had I advised thy voyage then,
This tragic parting had not been;
But then my friendship would not deem
Thou couldst aspire above esteem.

CHARLES.

Thou art aware I sought this shore
In hope its mildness would restore
My wasting health; how first we met,
When she and thou were hard beset
By brutes, at evening promenade,
And knew a stranger's timely aid;
How thence acquaintance ripening grew,
By pleasing intercourse, to true
Regard—and fleet those fair hours flew,
Till, stricken by the yellow fiend,
That lonely stranger found a friend,
Of ready skill and rapid proof,
Beneath thy spacious, kindly roof.

O, then, when through my dizzy brain
Whirled fever's mad tormenting train,
How pure Eudora's palm repressed
The demon dance and gave me rest!
And, though thy serious art was sure,
Her smiling care confirmed the cure.
Such care becomes a sister well,
But mine was where no care may dwell—
So soon she vanished from the earth
My young heart scarce discerned her worth;
Yet fond remembrance oft will turn
To clasp sweet Jane's untimely urn,

And linger there to muse upon
Parents and sister long since gone.
Had she been living then, and there,
My need had craved no other care,
And were her spirit here, 'twould bless
Eudora's Christian carefulness ;
For 'tis but Christianly to grace.
A dead or absent sister's place,
And thine did nothing more, nor less.
So well did she the place supply,
 So dear her precious presence grew,
 So winning was her gracious air,
All heart was I when she was nigh !
 My pulses thrilled with life anew,
 Inspiring hope and day-dreams fair.
That gratitude to love may grow,
And pity warm to love's soft glow,
Till both accord, is said to prove
How blamelessly began our love ;
And blameless still its course had run
When holy rite affirmed us one ;
And though I thought it best concealed
Awhile from thee, 'twas her to shield ;
For, though I knew thee free from guile,
And bounteous as this beaming Isle,
I also knew thy haughty mind,
And thy quick anger, O how blind !

MIGUEL.

Thy hand !—for love and death, I see,
Are levellers of all degree.
Thy hand ! I would forgive, and know
Return, and peace, before I go—

Whither? Death soon—too soon!—may show
That hopeless region doomed to dire
Remorse, the ever-during fire
And worm. O, could I but retrace
The past, and from its page erase
Regretted deeds recorded there,
Or hide them with a page more fair!
Of others' deeds I could complain
For many a wound to heart and brain:
Time might have measured their relief;
My *self-dealt* wounds are now my grief.
Yes! other wounds may heal, but these,
Neglected, run to soul-disease,
Which time heals not; repentance may,
If not 'till death we stretch delay:
But now my own repentant state,
I fear, comes all too late, too late!

EUDORA.

Brother; forbear ! enough, our woes,
Without thy dread, despairing close.
The wretch that on the cross implored
Was granted pardon and reward ;
So thou, dejected brother, pray
In faith and overcome dismay ;
And, as I place within thy palm
This cross, may pardoning Mercy calm
Thy anguish! If thou heedest—speak !
Ah, breathless lips and clammy cheek
With deathly silence make reply !
Yet I will trust he did not die
Uncomforted; for he did clasp
The precious emblem close, and gasp,

As if he heard, and strove to say
That all was well; so passed away.

Dear Charles! I too am passing; soon
Of all Earth's multitudes no boon
Taking, or asking, only this

Of thee only, that thou wilt wear
This cross—dear mother's gift—and kiss

When solitude and memory share
Retrospect of this grieved hour,
Appealing to that pitying Power
Who knows what griefs poor mortals bear,
And lets no suppliant despair.

Then shall Eudora hover nigh,
Responded to thy prayerful sigh,
Thy sister friend, as once before,
Thy spirit-love, but bride no more,
To win thee to a worthier shore.

So, not too long nor deeply mourn
The fell mischance this night has borne,
Nor feel that we have loved in vain;
Full surely we shall meet again!

CHARLES.

My sorrow wears a darker mood,
I lack thy saintly fortitude;
I must not, will not, leave thee so,
And henceforth bear upbraiding woe.
Eudora, come! I'll waft thee hence
To years of loving recompense!

EUDORA.

Ah, fate denies thy fond request,
And something whispers now, 'tis best;

For God doth order all things well
 For them whose hearts no more rebel.
 What we had been, 'twere vain to muse ;
 What thou mayst be, is thine to choose ;
 O may thy choice insure thee bliss !

Now take our first—our farewell kiss,
 And fly at once this periled place :—
 I faint—I die—in thy embrace !
 From death—to life—I —

————— Peace, O peace,
 Mad waves ! your strife a moment cease ;
 In pity let him hear her last
 Faint, fleeting, farewell tone. 'Tis past—
 Silent—the voice that soothed his heart :—
 Wretch ! lay thy lost one down—depart !

The sentry, pacing Puenta's wall,
 Had heard Eudora's shrieking call,
 And to the guardroom gave alarm,
 That bade a file for duty arm.
 Now, tardily, as loth to dare
 The threatening storm, and needless bear
 Its brunt, with time-beat tramp, and arms
 Whose angry martial clang alarms,
 They come. He heeds, as from the dead
 At last he lifts his hopeless head.
 That lately love-illumined face—

Her lips which, though their tuneful breath
 Be fled, smile sweetness still in death,
 His own in wild despair embrace ;
 Then on the crimsoned rock he lays
 The loved, unconscious form, yet stays
 Lingering, to look a last farewell—
 "What have we here—who are ye ?—tell ! "

The sergeant claims, "Surrender—stand!"
Beware!—the pointed deaths surround!
One glance—a sigh—a sudden bound
That frees him flying to the strand—
Some hasty shot pursue, in vain—
He springs aboard—they row amain.

Where Campo Santo* cedars gloom
O'er walls where many a kindred bone
And many a cross in dust are strown,
Unnoted stands Eudora's tomb;
Yet on that consecrated ground
Shall never fairer form be found,
Nor sweeter saint by bliss be crowned:
And one is smoldering near beside,
Fierce heir of stern, ancestral pride,
Rash brother of that victim bride.
Near by that solemn place of sleep
Perpetual moans the restless deep,
That, when for midnight anthem tolls
Death's bell, its deeper dirges rolls:
And pallid Superstition there,
With plaintive voice and dreary air,
To her awed train at wan twilight
Repeats the terrors of that night,
The shriek—the death—the desperate flight;
And still, at every shuddering pause, her eye
Slow searches 'round, as if their ghosts were nigh.

That night long since has passed away,
And beauty's tresses turned to gray,
And beauty's self to shapeless clay,
Yet still its fugitive drags on,

*Place of sepulture, Havana.

His earthly hopes and passions gone.

Yes, time may bloom as fair a flower
As that which blest his youthful hour,
In all as lovely, pure and true,
As charming to impartial view,
But ne'er could he that flower caress,
Or view with more than listlessness ;
Yet, if a tender thought he gave,
T'would be for one he failed to save,
And wake to pain his chastened sighs,
And dim his deeply pensive eyes.

For perished flower and fruitless years
His sighs were vain, in vain his tears,
Were not the guardian saints addressed,
Were not that farewell gift caressed :
'Tis then her influence hovers near,
Serene, with sainted love to cheer,
To lull his heart to balmy rest,
And soul illume by visions blest,--
Gleams from that evershining shore
Where the true meet to part no more.

Thus love and faith in pious mood
Anticipate beatitude.

HAVANA, CUBA, May, 1841.

VENDUE.*

At this visit Miss Muse was en déshabille,*
Yet she smilingly beckoned, "admissible!"
For she's but a frank little wildwood maid,
And we often together in childhood played;
As blithe as the birds were our rovings then
In Nature's free gardens of grove and glen,
Where, culling wild flowers of varient dye,
We wove them in garlands, sweet Airie and I.
O now for the charms of that childhood hour,
The innocent joys in the wildwood bower!
Yet I sometimes meet with their beaming band,
Where the bygones greet, in the dreaming land.

"All have a price"—of *eld* is the thought,
Most modern knowledge is but the gleam
Reflected of ancient wisdom's beam—
"But bid their price, and the best may be bought."
Yet as various their prices as heart can desire,
Antagonist, too, as water and fire.

Though brokers and bankers officiate for gold,
'Tis likely that they've little wish to be "sold;"
And so, from the priests of the mettaline god,
To the devotees now let the paradox plod.

*In allusion to the uneven, slipshod movement of the verse.

Hoarse for gold is the demagogue's throat,
And gilded each face of his candidate coat :
The president pilots the ship of State
With eager eye to the golden gate ;
Recks he if after wreck be her fate ?

The shrewishest maid a wife is made,
If her dowerbox boast good golden store ;
While the indigent beauty's the elegant booty
Of Shoddiben Bonds in his youth of four-score.

Ah, that the maidenly Muses, too,
Should ever unveil in that vile vendue,
Where their delicate draperies are trampled and torn,
And their spiritous beauty the gaze of gross scorn.

The "bread of life," too, in the same vendue
Is put up together with the costliest pew,
In that sumptuous fane at whose portal grand
Needy sinners suffering stand,
Famishing mendicants, young and old,
Perishing penitents, pale and cold,
While the bell in the belfry mocks, "gold—gold
sold—sold!"

But that is Satan's bid ; let Satan deplore—
Could he but pray 'twould avail him far more—
For another hath bidden, *bidden* and *paid*,
A bidder so *poor* " no place for his head."
Though dewy his meek, compassioning eyes,
Satan and Death the Martyr defies—
For man ! O, Infinite Sacrifice !
The angels sing, the glories they sing
Of the crucified Brother, Redeemer and King,
And the stars glow praise, in rejoicings bright,
For the sister* restored to celestial Light.

Lo, along the various ways of life,

* Earth ransomed and purified.

Through scenes of splendor—squalor—strife,
Of even step and brow serene
The “good Samaritan” is seen ;
Whenever human woes appear,
His hands relieve, his counsels cheer ;
His robe from stain of lucre free,
Christ’s almoner on earth is he.
“Claims *he* reward ?” He does, and should —
The luxury of doing good.

See Mammon’s slave, who knows not ruth
For others’ woe,—whose wintry youth
Scowls grasping greeds’ o’erclouded brow,
Harsh corrugated by care’s plow,—
Whose niggard grasp almost denies
Meagre necessity supplies—
As if God’s bounties were not sent
To be enjoyed and give content !—
Whose widest wish is sordid self,
And highest heaven his heaped-up pelf.

Man’s life, whether rich or poor, tedious or fleeting,
This oft-told truth is ever repeating,
And its saddening lesson the youthful must learn,
Venal the world, wherever we turn.

Aye, even the hearts that with fresh loves yearn,
Pure as the pearls Morn’s lillies hold,
Loves far more precious than station or gold,
Are prey to the schemes of the covetous old,—
As if wealth could prove an anodyne,
Its heart-pearl lost, for the ravaged shrine !
Like opening rosebuds nipt by frost,
Pining for bloom and fragrance lost,
Is pure young love by avarice crost.

Who says this nation is lucre-mad,
That its freedom for infamous gain may be had ?

From necessity many, but more from design,
What a host are the vassals of Mammon malign
Yes, *taxes* and *toil*, dark poverty's doom,
The mine and the forge, the plow and the loom,
Yield grandeur and gold, yield fruits and perfume,
That miser's may hoard and profligates squander,
While weary the workers in wretchedness ponder.
Shame! That Columbia's bountiful shores
Should know the extremes that true wisdom deplores,
Where Labor lies starving near Mammon's swollen
stores.

Alas, what shall such stores avail
The dwellers supine in the desolate pale!
There, fame's a mere fable, life's gain but dead loss,
Gloomy is grandeur, and gold but dull dross,
Forbidden at Charon's cold ferry to cross.
There, nothing to them are sunshine and showers,
Or warbling of birds amid blossoming bowers.
If the Seasons glide on in their annular flow,
Or the ice-king involve them in shrouding of snow,
They know not—*Shall ever they know?*
To *them*, but a blank is the volume of life,
With its glory, its gain, its sin and its strife:
Love's adulant lute, the battlefield's roar,
Nor modern-bound tome, nor the Book of dim yore,
Shall delight them, alarm, or instruct, any more.
Under the willows profoundly they slumber,
Evermore resting, no cares to encumber;
Under the willows, low drooping and pale,
Their's but the fate that o'er all must prevail.
'Tis *told* by their tombstones, moss overgrown,
By airs that the bent boughs ever tone
To a solemn, slow, funereal tone:
'Tis *seen* in the morning's transient queen

Wasting away from the solar sheen :
When the noontide Orb's relentless glow
Glares on the feverish world below,
In the mirage *seen* by the desert-lost,
As the luring views his faint steps mock,
And his last straining nerve exhaust,—
Then fade, nor leave even hope a rock :

In the picturesque scenes on yon sunset shore,
By inimitable pencil drawn,
Where the tranced young Moon bends gazing o'er
The dissolving splendors that form no more,
The gorgeous pageant for the monarch gone.
Evanishing *thus*, earthly glory's array :
And the serfs that serve and the lords who sway
So pass from their places to swift decay,
Thronging together that dusty highway
Which leads his guests to the pale king's board,
Where the beggar's at feast* with the haughtiest lord.
Shall, in that vast chamber commingling, lie down
The wealthy, the poor, the sage and the clown ;
For the feeble no more are the strong ones' sport
There, in that plain king's equal court.
There Envy's eyes no bale-shafts dart,
Nor Ennui sighs from the surfeited heart ;
For the mystical phosphor-phantoms, met
At their cairn when Night's mid watch is set,
Are the all of Poverty, Pride and Power,
These transient tenants of an earthly hour.

March, 1868.

* "Not where he eats but is eaten."—Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act IV, Scene 3d.

THE TEMPTER.*

Come, muse, and let us range an hour,
To note an all-pervasive power,
Inciter of each sentient thing,
Sweet pleasure's source, pure virtue's spring,
Alike for peasant, priest and king,—
Than which, when scorning reason's ray,
No fouler fiend pollutes the day ;
Or subtler, from supernal light,
Lured angels down to endless night ;
Or fiercer, on a condemned world,
Perditions vengeful terrors hurled.

First should appropriate numbers tell,
How once, — well pleased awhile to dwell
Where flowers most exquisitely fair,
And most delicious fruits, and rare,
Glowed of the Father's bounteous power,—

Oft in the *Garden* wont to throng
Celestial visitants, and bower
With blissful bower, delightful song
Responding, vied in gracious greeting,
Sweet Echo's shell each air repeating :
How *he*, — admired and honored then
By minds angelic, first of men,

Pre-eminently formed and blest,—
 First sighed, when some emotive guest,
 At moonlit hour, in witching measure
 Sang peerless love, sang blushing pleasure.

Then his first sense of loneliness,
 His wish for one, than angel less,
 By close companionship to bless ;
 When soon, this first-born want to scan,
 Deep musing, through the kindling man
 In a transporting fervor ran
 Emotion—fierce ethereal fire
 Flashed in his veins, and young Desire
 Sprang from his heart.

Forth then, supreme

In beatuty, lovely as a dream,
 Or vision of beatitude,
 Flush to his gaze the *Tempter* stood,
 Triumphantly,—still o'er his Race
 Triumphs, our glory or disgrace.

Unnumbered protean shapes he wears,
 As various are the names he bears ;
 Unnumbered winning wiles he knows,
 As various as the views he shows ;
 Of half to tell were effort vain

As aim to number Fashion's changes,
 Or California's golden grain,
 Or mazy multitude that ranges
 Ambrosial Flora's vast domain.

The germ of budding hope his power
 Expands to passion's glowing flower.

In quest of life's consummate good,
 As this by each is understood.
 Its crowning unalloyed delight,

With more than fleeting splendor bright,
He bids exhaust the land, the wave,
Then map new worlds beyond the grave.
He sways the universal mind
In empire endless, unconfined :
Yea, *wisdom*, cased in crown or cowl,
Scarce finds exemption by quick flight
From his bright presence,—as the owl
Flies from the dazzling lord of light.
He plans Ambition's stateliest schemes ;
He prompts slow Science by bold dreams :
On Shinar's plain—misdeed sublime !
He led that high attempt to climb
By earth-based tower the upper sky,
And destiny and flood defy.

Lo, to invade the realms of snow,
Brave *Franklin* arms the daring prow ;
Such task a nation's honors claim,
And Science courts his worthy name.
Then home and friends he bids adieu,
And *wife*, the truest of the true ;
Next, Albion quick recedes from view
Beyond the blue uparching tides,
As the bold expedition rides
Out on the billowy world afar,
Hastening to hail the Arctic star.
Approving winds their wings confer
To speed the noble mariner,
And merrily sing the ocean swells,
Flashed by the flying caravels,
That sea-born melody so dear
To every genuine sailor's ear,
While many a *yarn* by Jack is *spun*

Of marvels seen and dangers run
Since when his rover race begun ;
And fond Anticipation's sheen
Fore-gilds far regions yet unseen
Of wild and wonderful and grand :
Thus days to weeks and months expand
Nearing a dim mysterious land.
At length, the open main is crost ;
And soon the narrowing sea is lost
In labyrinths of floating frost.
The *roads* of commerce far behind,
They onward still and nor'ward wind ;
Till stunted shrub and scraggy strand
Show less and rare on either hand ;
Till scowling skies, of leaden hue,
Warn, and the water's fading blue ;
While through dim ice-vaults phantoms fly,
And sounds unearthly boding sigh.

Now rugged Esquimaux chiefs stare
To hear how far Sir John would dare,
And kindly counsel, “ Pause — beware !
Nor hope mere mortal may explore
Yon darker sky and deadlier shore.
Turn ! — backward search the closing way
To some less bleakly dangerous bay,
More spacious hearths and broader day.”
Replies the dauntless Franklin, “ No !
This purpose halts for ice nor snow,
Nor sullen signs above, below —
On ! till our prows exultant glide
Free on the crested Polar tide.”

Long, dreary moon-months wane, — for here
No changing seasons mete the year,

Nor genial suns the wide waste cheer ;
But an unpitying fate severe
Prisons the infant rays of light
In one eternal spectral night,
Where Desolation guards his throne,
Forever frowning, listening, lone,
These dismal regions all his own.

Yet, “On—still on !” The toilful course,
Obstinate, tasks the crew’s full force ;
But “On !” The close-contested way
'Mid clashing crags that toppling sway ;
Where solveless snows accumulate,
And ponderous ice-fields ocean freight ;
Where man hath ventured ne’er before,
Where few may follow ever more.

But now fatigue and cold assert
Their laws. The seamen, long alert,
Droop by degrees, enerv'd, inert,
And, one by one, with hopeless heart
Fall by the frost-fiend’s numbing dart ;
They first, the injured seamen, sink,

While nurtured men, defiant still,
Linger debating on the brink,
Delaying fate by lordly will,
As thoughts of home their bosoms fill.

Yet these at last submit to doom,
And sink o’erwhelmed amid the gloom ;
Then *he*, disdaining selfish stay,
Their loved chief, follows them away ;
A twilight world their common tomb,
Forbidding local date and name ;
Their elegy, a mournful fame.

Thus, unavailing lore to gain,

Lamented Franklin fell in vain,
Lost in the Tempter's victim-train.

His are the hateful deeds of strife :
He points the dark assassin's knife,
Incites mad hosts to fratricide,
And prompts by brutal Conquest's side ;
Then, Hell's infuriate harvest won
In fields of havoc reeking dun,
He o'er the scenes, accurst and gory,
A glamor spreads—fools call it “glory.”
'Twas he impelled that savage sword,
That monster evermore abhorred,
Who, winging wide his hybrid troop,
Fell harpies in rapacious swoop,
Raged o'er a fair defenseless land
With devastating, ruthless brand,
Till Hope and Mercy fled afar,
And, quenched in blood, sank Freedom's star.

Where thousands throng, but seldom greet ;
Where eddying streams of traffic flow
Dense through the surging, sounding street ;
Where wealth and pleasure, want and woe,
Are rife, an ever-clashing host,
To shame that “*progress*” moderns boast ;
Where guileless virtue dwells,—and then,
Adjacent, putrid vice hath den ;
Where moral life, where mental skill,
Aspire to pure perfection still;
Where springs forth many a specious plan,
Prolific in its bane to man—
This mixed and mighty human wave
Onsweeping to the gulfy grave,—

This famed Metropolis, and grand,
That boasts on either crescive hand
A tribute ocean, subject land,—
What can so temptingly invite . . .
The Tempter, or his stay requisite?

Where millionaires most congregate,
There he presides in tyrant state ;
No prince or prelate near so proud,
No orient nabob half so grand ;
To him are haughtiest magnates bowed,
Earth's treasures wait his high command ;
His smile elates, his frown dismay's.
And nearest Fate his fiat sways.

His is the gaudy gilt saloon,
Where glittering midnight mimics noon ;
Where Fortune's giddying wheel is rolled
Mid madding heaps of mocking gold ;
Where pictured nymphs in gauzy dress
More than forbidden books express ;
Where youths the fiendful goblet drain,
Which cheats the heart, consumes the brain,
And to hell hurls the soul amain.

Once he a noted pulpit filled,
And by apostate tenets thrilled
The grasping, giddy, vain and vile,
Who sought plain conscience to beguile.
He spake in serio-comic strain,
He gestured in theatric vein ;
Pert mountebank and portly preacher,
He soon became the worshipped teacher
And universal over-reacher.
With diabolic eloquence,

And more than Satan's impudence,
He said : " Who deems your bible true ?
You need new god and bible, too,
Conferring sovereign sweep to draw
Great moral ideas higher law ! "

To heaven he planned a broader road
Than Paine or Voltaire ever trode,
A facile way, all fancy-wrought,
That saint nor martyr ever sought.
He preached a love, more lewd than lust,
And law, to license deeds unjust :
In Church, he bred consuming schism ;
In State, a mongrel communism.
Then some, of sense and training true,
With sad foreboding thence withdrew,
While knaves and dupes in glad accord
Embraced his *creed*, " No hell, no Lord. "
But now of this care he has none,
He hath so many an able son,
Of whom that ever-meddling brood
Of heretics, polite, or rude,
That on the afflicted world obtrude.

Mere infidels may be reclaimed,
Yea ! even angels that rebel,
But hypocrites are sureliest damned
Of all that sin outside of hell.

In that superbly social scene,
Which chastely shows as snowy sheen,
Where polished leisure loves to shine,
And virtue, beauty, wit, combine
To lend the hour an air divine ;
E'en *there*, in friendship's sacred mien
The Tempter glides, a graceful guest,

Heart-welcomed even by the best.
Some special compliment to pay,
He knows, some charming thing to say,—
Ah ! when his whispered sweets she hears,
Young Innocence forgets her fears,
Forgets dire warnings daily taught
By many a straying sorrower's lot.
Daughters of Eve ! forbid the hour
That brings this flatterer near your bower.
His eyes, like charming serpents', play,
And fascinate the fluttering prey ;
His smiles, like meteors in the brake,
Mislead the trusting, then—forsake ;
His touch dissolves the zone of grace,
And shrouds in shame the fairest face ;
His favors end in night and storm,
In soul debased and blighted form ;
Then chill remorse and fear assail
The fall'n, despair, and terror pale
Sisters in beauty's dangerous dower !
By watchful prayer avert the hour
Would place you in that foeman's power :
Rely not on obsequious guards,
Prone to betray for his rewards,
But still that monitor attend,
Which, next to Heaven, is truest friend.

Now, final of our theme, excursive muse,
Turn from the town's inviting—adverse, views,
To where, mid yon'er festal sylvan scene,
Enamored walks a youth, whose free, frank mien,
Broad breast and ample brow, that tower above
The crowd, might please the choicest lady's love.
See ! clinging to his arm in loving guise

A buxom beauty with audacious eyes,
That dance and sparkle with glamouring glee,
Exultant of the conquest soon to be.

That youth is near infatuate, and thinks
Not from a fell enchantress' cup he drinks,—
For the designing fair one ever blinds
Her object's reason ere himself she binds.

My son—my son, more dear than terms can tell,
Beware—beware the *temptress'* subtle spell !
Gaze not, thou honest, open-hearted boy,
On fascinations luring to destroy :
Be blind to artificial beauty, deaf
To her dissembling notes of joy or grief ;
Break through the sly Arachne's selfish wiles,
Avoid her, heedless of her frowns and smiles.
Gay *widow*, she ! for all her piteous sigh,
Her weeds of woven midnight, glistening eye,
And oft allusions to that former “*fly*,”
“Her dear departed one, so true, so kind,
Oh ne'er more shall she perfection find !”
And then she archly hints of passion's birth
In Crœsus' sons, that strove to win her worth
By rival gifts of jeweled, generous gold ;
But then—“ those fools were *widowers*, and *old* ;
And holily her priceless pearl she's kept,
And ne'er will wed again—except—except ! ”

O son, my own impulsive, wayward boy,
Hope of our age, thy gentle mother's joy,
Desist ! Wouldst thou thy parents' peace destroy,
And all thy youth's fair prospects rashly cloud,

To be a heartless vixen's lifelong slave ?
Discreetly mate, or evermore defer ;
O, ask no nuptial chamber drest for her !

Far less the pain to wrap his timeless shroud,
And yield, bereaved, our darling to the grave.

Now must the *panorama* close—
These slight suggestions, curt and crude,
For plastic genius' graphic mood,—
Good-night! alike to friends and foes,
To hours of pain-eluding* quest,
Imagined scene and visioned guest;
Here farewell all,—but hope of rest.

1871.



* The writer was suffering from a painful accident.

CARRIER'S ADDRESS,*

OF THE LEXINGTON APPEAL, JANUARY 1, 1848.

The dwindled days, the tedious nights,
Dispose the bard to fancy's flights;
The closing year, the cheerful fire,

The ardent wish to wing a sermon
To edify our cousins german—
These hint the theme and help inspire.

Now, lo, with what a stealthy mein
The old year slides behind the screen,
As if that pack upon his shoulder

Were with our choicest treasures stown,
And he in dread lest some beholder

Should there espy and claim his own.
Stop thief!—a moment let us look
Into that pack. What's here—a book?
“ ‘Tis nothing else!” and written o'er
With names, we think, ten thousand score,
And deeds, full twice ten millions more.
Cute clerk—sly chronicler—old spy!
Thou, by the rules of war, shouldst die.
Why, what a host of bitter charges

Against mankind we herein view—
 Most slanderous, all, if he enlarges,
 But ah, for all how sad, if true !
 For, in the volume of the year,
 But few redeeming deeds appear,
 And these of such a dubious kind
 As show the actor's wavering mind ;
 Mere things of craft and compromise,
 Whereby we sought to blind the skies,
 And from our errors turn their eyes.
 Yet let us read a few—the best,
 And see how well they stand the test :—
 “ Most glorious victory by Taylor ! ”*
 Wherein at fivefold odds he beat
 Our Sister,† forced her courage fail her,
 And fly,—as flies a herd of neet
 When sweeps the fire athwart the prairie
 In broadening blaze and fierce career,
 With stormy speed and front of fear,—
 “ O 'twas a glorious victory,”—very !
 For which—slight recompense ! —’tis meant
 To make him our next President.
 “ Another victory, by Scott,
 Wherein at *equal odds* he fought,”
 As, on each ancient height arrayed,
 A shadowy Race‡ the fight surveyed,
 Calling the fame of Lundy’s lane
 To heap the field with hosts of slain,
 Avenge each violated hall,

* Battle of Buena Vista.

† Sister Republic.

Shades of the ancient Mexicans.

And free the land from faction's thrall.

Should Freedom's champions scorn the thought
To be by less than freemen fought,
Or deem the triumph worse than vain
O'er nerveless host that wear the chain ?

Turn from the deeds of noble name,
And view the sins of social shame,
A countless train of varied dyes,
From murder's stain to *whitest* lies ;
From grand intrigues to petty schemes,
The sharper's wiles, ambition's dreams ;
Hypocrisy with Janus leer,
And bigotry with scowl severe ;
Dull envy with detractive speech
Maligning worth it cannot reach,
And sophistry with serpent tongue,
By which the truth is sorest stung—
These but the catalogue begin,
Mere drops within the Ocean *Sin*.

Nor few the idiot sons of pride,
With each a vanity for bride ;
Such let the laughing satirist show,
My pen must point to scenes of woe,
Where, gloomier than the wintry gale,
Ascends the friendless widow's wail,
Where poverty with pleading eye
Beholds her famished* orphans die,
As prostrate pity vain implores
Obdurate Mammon's swelling stores,—
But not in vain Columbian shores.

* Famine in Ireland, 1847.

“ Hail Columbia ! ” land of plenty,
Open hearts and hands that dare,
With thy daughters eight-and-twenty,*
Hail Columbia, Freedom’s heir !
Swift let the circling seasons roll
That waft thee *honor’s* blest increase,
Till Earth is free from Pole to Pole,
And thou with all the free at peace.
Wanes the old year. In cloud and storm
Lamenting Nature shrouds her form,
As if she mourned with mourning man
His perished hopes, his narrowed span ;
O’er freindship’s tomb —for virtue’s fall,
With few she mourns —she weeps for all.
Departs the old year, ’forty-seven ;
Now eager thousands greet the new,
Whose souls, ere half its days be through,
Must hence depart—be it to Heaven !



* The then number of States.

SONS OF LABOR.*

Though with hands so wonder-working,
Blind were they, those giant-bands,
Who, in ages dimly distant,
Civilized Earth's savage lands.

Though they paved the paths of progress,
Gave to empire base and gauge,
Fame for them no trumpet sounded,
History spurned them from her page.

Had they seen and walked with wisdom,
None had classed them with the slave ;
Nor Ambition, Mammon, drove them,
Crushed and bleeding, to the grave.

War consumed them by the millions,
When for conquest sceptres strove ;
Peace, less swiftly yet as surely,
When the victor's minions throve.

Then the arch and costly column
Rose to boast what despots did,
While some Pharaoh's shrunken mummy
Claimed stupendous pyramid.

Asia many a Nimrod vaunted,
Egypt many a sceptered lord;
Cities, temples, ruin-haunted,
Whom and what do these record?

Genius guiding patient Labor
In each bold and fair design,
While for many a prostrate people
Freedom's sun had ceased to shine.

Low the graves, and unregarded,
Where the sons of Labor rest;
Folded to their mother's bosom,
There they heed no lord's behest.

1869.



FRAUD AND FORCE.*

Where solely for a favored few
The hapless millions toil and bleed,
Yet fail, withal, enough to do,
That groaning land is curst indeed.

To Fraud and Force all Earth is prey;
That dupes, and *this* subjects, the throng,
Then both together share the sway
And spoils of preconcerted wrong.

Conspirators against the good
Of humankind in every age,
Strange that the plundered multitude
Forbears to rend them in its rage!

In vain have slippery statesmen sought
To compromise 'tween *right* and *wrong*;
Such temporizing ever brought
Contentions baleful, fierce and long.

They who would build a prosperous State,
Still by the *golden rule* must frame,
With no extreme of small or great
That just proportion does not claim

Then strict *Integrity* must guard
The avenues to public trust,
Insure the patriot's fair reward,
And bad ambition doom to dust.

Yet foolish freemen idly sleep
While rival interests wreck the State,
Then wake—beneath a throne to creep
From anarchy's all-evil fate.

Free Rome had fall'n before the day
Shrewd Cæsar spurned the Rubicon ;
The hour had come when one must sway,
Or all by discord be undone.

Too wide her sanguine eagle flew,—
Relentless bird of pride and prey,
Fit emblem for marauding crew !—
Invasive regions far away.

Corrupting gold and venal need,
Patrician scorn, plebeian hate,
With luxury's insatiate greed,
Had banished virtue from the State.

She mourned her freedom, 'reft of all ;
Too late, experience made her wise ;
For none escape the despot's thrall,
His brutal bands and secret spies.

What can a Brutus' steel avail
When Commonwealths forego their laws ?
The noblest zeal must ever fail
That singly strikes in freedom's cause.

Yet Tells and Emmets still shall rise,
To dare and die for sacred right,—
Lo, faithful Erin* still defies
Perfidious Albions's tyrant might !

Let knaves and tyrants dread the day
That final conflict must begin,
When Truth's invincible array
Shall sweep from Earth the hordes of Sin !

The bannered Cross unroll again !
That righteous emblem led the brave
On Palestine's immortal plain,
Shall yet in peaceful triumph wave
From Pole to Pole, from main to main,
From *Fraud* and *Force* a world to save.

1868.



* The Fenian movement, at the time prominent.

SOUTHLAND.

Land of beauty, sun-loved Southland—
Wronged, insulted, outraged Southland,

Trampled, tortured, torn !

From thy bowers, blighted bowers,
Strown with sere funereal flowers,
Dirgeful wail is borne.

For the night of tribulation,
Sabled shrines and desolation,

Glooming all thy shores ;

For thy youthful, brave and truthful,
Slain by banded foes unruthful,
Freedom's self deplores.

Arms and armies sceptered traders
Sold and sent to thy invaders ;

Many warred on one :

Long the conflict, long and bloody ;
Fields were crimson, rivers ruddy,
Ere the fight was done.

In the ghastly glee of battle,
Mid the rush and roar and rattle,

Many a hero's doom :

One, thy Chieftain, since departed
“ For his people broken-hearted,”
Mourns his honored tomb.

Ever heeding Freedom's leading,
Lived thy martyrs ; some died bleeding ;
 All, beloved and true :
Earth, in all her vast beholding,
Time, in all his scroll's infolding,
 Never nobler knew.

By thy faithful bards and sages
To admiring future ages
 Will their worth be told,
And not ever in forever
Greater than their great endeavor
 May the world behold.

They thy sons were, thine their story,
Thine to share their cloudless glory,
 Mother, mourning now :
Then, though friends seem now to fail thee,
Though both man and fiend assail thee,
 Yet, despair not thou.

Deeply injured land of sorrow,
Trust to truth's rewarding morrow,
 Faith and works employ ;
Then thy bowers shall cease to languish,
Then thy tearful moans of anguish
 Change to songs of joy.

ISHMAEL.*

At early morn rose Abraham,
Constrained, in deep distress,
To send his son with Hagar forth
Into the wilderness.
Of bread and water sadly scant
Their perishing supply ;
And thus outcast they went to live,
Or in the desert die.
Impelled from Sarah's jealous wrath,
They wandered far the wild,
Till sore fatigue and fevered thirst
O'ercame the fainting child.
No sympathizing aid of man,
No sheltering tent, was nigh ;
None traced their course, none marked their woe,
But the all-seeing Eye.
Where desolation, like a pall,
In gloomy grandeur spread ;
Where every sound had mournful fall,
Like clods on coffined dead ;
There 'neath a shrub the mother laid
Her boy, and far off crept ;
Then sat with sad, averted face,
Complained aloud, and wept.

Then from the ambient heaven replied
An angel's cheering tone:—
“ What ails thee, Hagar? He hath heard
Thy suffering Ishmael's moan.
Arise, attend the lad; behold,
A fount's refreshing flow!
Lead thither; thence, in faith renewed,
Onward with Ishmael go.
His is this wide wild's fierce domain,
E'n here to prosper well;
By brethren shunned and feared, he still
Shall in their presence dwell.”
Almost four thousand years have fled
Since that prophetic day,
And many a mighty empire since
Arose—and passed away;
Through foreign regions Isaac's sons
Are scattered far and wide;
Yet freely o'er his promised land
The sons of Ishmael ride.
Swift gliding as the eagle's wing,
Their tameless haunts they roam,—
No hostile hands may bind the bands
Whose flitting tents are home.
Those slender tents shall long outlast
The monarch's marble hall,
Outlast proud Progress' vaunting arts,
And triumph in their fall.

MARY.*

In her valleys, on her mounatins,
Peopled plains and deserts lone,
Seas and lakes and flashing fountains,
Syria's sun serenely shone.

Galilee was tranquil beauty,
Grateful gladness, Sabbath-born ;
Glittered jewelled leaf and blossom
In the coronal of morn.

Minstrel birds were matins singing
In the ringing woodland aisles ;
Every altar offered incense.
Nature charmed with sweetest smiles.

Then a faultless Hebrew maiden
Graced a garden, gliding slow,
While the sun with pearly circlet
Crowned her rich hair's ruby flow.

Thronging round were sister flowers,
Perfect in their varied bloom,
Vying for her gentle greeting,
Sighing exquisite perfume.

Though she gave no glance of heeding
For the pleading floral race,
Yet her face, so vestal sinless,
Showed no sorrow's shading trace.

Onward passed the maiden, chanting
Soft and low a song of yore,
Like the ark-crowned mountain listened
Sung by world-renewing Noah.

Where in foliage-braided bower
Dewy twilight long delays,
Near the vine-swung portal paused she,
Statue-still in wonder-gaze.

See! within that bloomy twining
Bows a shining messenger,—
Lowly, in his salutation,
Bends the godlike guest to her.

“ Hail, most favored ! ” thus the angel,
“ List! evangel joys I sing :
Israel’s great Messias cometh,—
Thine the Prince of Peace to bring ! ”

Instant o’er the gloried garden
Burst a flood of melody,
Earth with tuneful transport trembled,
Heaven prolonged the symphony.

Reverent knelt the *Blessed Virgin*,
Thus by Heaven’s high mission hailed,
Glowed her face with sacred rapture,
Ecstasy her meek eyes veiled.

Then the Holy Ghost, descending
On the bending, votive maid,

With her human nature blending,
God's great love to man displayed.

Soared the pæan—distant—melting
In the azure far-away ;
Still a fond and dreamlike echo
Lingered all that lovely day.

Thus was vanished Eden visioned
On that morn in Palestine ;
Thus was Eve atoned by Mary,
Adam, by the Son Divine.

January, 1875.



INTRODUCTIVE.

FOR MISS J. F. S——'S ALBUM.

Like fading flowers in vernal bowers,
Our youth's fair pleasures soon decay ;
Encroaching cares claim coming hours,
And social virtues feel their sway,
Till greeting hands scarce touch in fold,
And love's changed eyes seem strangely cold.

When thronging fears and toils and tears,
With time, oppress the form and mind,
How sweet to dream of vanished years !

For *this* the Album's page designed :
May all its votive offerings show
Dear friendships pure as angels know !

1868.

DEATH OF FRIENDS.

A sacred grief within the soul,
A softening of the eyes,
As the sad bell's slow-measured knoll
In deep-toned cadence sighs.

Another friend, life's labors done,
Has fled from strife and pain :
Of all that blest since life begun,
Alas, how few remain !

So oft we've mourned departing worth,
Borne to the dread abyss,
Life seems a funeral scene, and Earth
One vast necropolis.

Some in far fields of battle fell,
When hate was vengeful hot,
Mid loving homes some bade farewell ;
Yet none may be forgot.

As life's eventful pilgrimage
Draws near its lonely end,
How oft pale memory views the page
That shows its earliest friend !

For not love's self unrivaled reigns
In young and faithful hearts ;
Pure friendship first a dwelling gains,
And bides when love departs.

Young love is, like the rose, but seen
While blooms the vernant bower;
Old friendship is the evergreen
That cheers life's wintry hour.

Yet in one heart may both abound,
If worthiness be there;
Such union, by religion crowned,
Is beautiful as rare.

Proud gems and gold, in sumless store,
To this compared, are dross;
Then deeply must the heart deplore
Such priceless treasure's loss.

Yet we should not lament as lost
Friends passed to perfect rest;
When death's dark gulf is safely crossed,
The soul is amply blessed.

Dear friends! mourn not when I am gone—
Be none but foes depressed;
Yourselves shall gently follow on,
And they no more molest.

February, 1876.



IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. ELIZABETH LATHIM, OBIT, 1872.

She has lain all her burthens aside,
She has gone to her rest,
To the home where the ransomed abide,
Where the faithful are blest;
And no kindlier Christian, than she,
Shall the needy and suffering see.

JUNE.*

I.

When the merry birds warble in blossoming bowers,
When the clover and rye say that Summer is nigh,
While the chorus of Nature in fullness of powers
With the promise of plenty enraptures the hours,
Then for freedom and flowers how the city hive sigh !
How with leisure to pleasure the fortunate fly !

II.

Ere the warblers are mute, ere the blossoms are gone,
Then were leisure most meet, then were pleasure most sweet,
To the weary and worn, to the wretched and wan,
Whom the eye of oppression glares sternly upon
As they struggle and faint in the merciless street ;
What a refuge to these were some sylvan retreat !

III.

There are myriads of bees on melodious wing,
Where the locust groves grow their blent emerald and snow,
And an ocean of odors the Southern winds bring,
And in infinite numbers vitalities spring,
As the sunbeams of June, in a vertical flow,
Are embracing the world with a life-giving glow.

IV.

In the mountains, where Winter's clouds treasured the store,
All the channels redound, as with rushing resound
To the plains the freed waters exultingly pour,
And like thunder afar the wild cataracts roar,
While *Missouri*, made mighty from tributes around,
With victorious torrent sweeps over all bound.

V.

Lo! proud Summer has come,—but meek Spring has far sped :
To the clime of pure rest, where our loved ones are blest,
Where her garlanded sweets for the sainted are shed,
To those Edens the beautiful fugitive fled ;
Yet her smiling adieu still empurples the West
While the couch of the sunbeam in glory is drest.

VI.

Now, where lindens lean gazing on mirroring brook,
And the vines full in bloom all the valley perfume,
Let the pupil of Walton well practice his hook,
And the student dream over his favorite book,
While in burning broad field and in dusty dim room
The sad world of dull drudging drags on to the tomb.

1869.



SEPTEMBER.*

It is the month of closing heat,
Maturing field and fruited bough,
When Summer leaves his Northern seat
To Autumn, of the balding brow.

Now, far from that quadrennial broil
Ignoble aspirants incite
Among the simple sons of toil,
To cheat them of each lingering right,

To shun that self-deluding din
I seek the wildwoods's leafy tent,
Where glinting sunbeams, glancing in,
Seem like sweet dreams to sadness sent.

Here let me peaceful pass the day,
And, like that placid gliding stream,
Reflect, haunt memory's shadowy way,
Or dream calm age's tranquil dream.

Why need I care which demagogue
The millions choose to mock their hope ?
Whether he prove king Stork, or Log,
Chagrin shall know no narrowed scope.

Ah, sadly all the ages teach,
That freedom's sons have still been few ;
For, as the sacred pages preach,
None merit freedom but the true.

In vain the ages teach and warn,
Almost in vain the page divine;
As yet, the struggling millions spurn
Good counsel, prone to choose malign.

Then why should I be yearned for those
Who will not heed e'en Wisdom's voice ?
'Twere best I seek my soul's repose,
And leave the willful to their choice.

And I've my own rude cross to bear,
So heavy, oft it sinks me down !
Yet I have blest precedent there,
Who bore the scorners' mocking crown.

1872.



DECEMBER.

FROM A SCENE NEAR THE OSAGE RIVER.

With brow morose and numbing tread
December comes to close the year;
The landscape's beauty all has fled,
And every view is sad and sere.

No rustic's whistling cheers the plow,
No chorist birds in concert greet,
Nor wooing South winds whisper now
To blushing rose or woodbine sweet.

Silent the shy repeatress, too,
The glen recluse, where used to stray
The loving, while impassioned flew
Delightful June's cerulean day.

Charmless and lone yon cedared cliff,
Where Fancy wove her airy wreath;
Nor wood-duck's wing nor sailing skiff
Dimples the dwindled stream beneath.

That stream in Summer curved amid
A wilderness of verdant hue;
At times in drowsy forests hid,
Thence flashing forth in dazzling view.

Then, all-embracing, bright serene;
Now, clouds on clouds opacious crowd,
That on the dun decaying scene
Ere long will spread the snowy shroud.

Swift down to night's redundant gloom
 Descends the dwarfed, dejected day,
 While, torpid in her annual tomb,
 Nature awaits resurgent ray.

Yet *they* who tenure yonder height,
 Devote to wintry death's domain,
Another sun's life-giving light
 Await, that none await in vain.

But *do* they wait? In coffined cell
 Can but dissolving dross be found?—
 Can “darling Mattie's”* spirit dwell,
 Inert, in rock-hewn charnel's bound?

Or, restless, yearning, is it roaming,
 A *sinless sigh*, the boundless air?
 A vista opens through the gloaming,
 A vision gathers, soft and fair:

The bud will blow, the fountain flow,
 Again, and all the land be gay;
 Proud fields will show, in harvest glow,
 Their grain—shall *these*, then pass away;
 But from the *dust* we vainly weep
 Hath bloomed a pure unfading flower,
 That God's most loving'angels keep
 To grace their own celestial bower.

1873.

*The writer's granddaughter

CEPISTLE TO DR. B. R. S., KY.

Dear Doctor B.:—Thou most fastidious fellow,
Whose pippins are mature and judgment mellow,
The Mewz, in lieu of close contactive meeting,
Doth interrogatively give thee greeting,
And begs, suspend thy *bill-ing* and thy cooing
Till thou has told us *what* and *how* thou'rt doing.
Say if salubrious art thou and thine,—
If bodily and mental health combine
To render ecstacy most exquisitely fine;
Inform of thy designs, and eke thy habits,
And if thou still delight'st in running rabbits;
What *grave* pursuits now claim thy sage pursuing,
And what frail mortal's life-lease thou'rt renewing.
When thou dost "*practice*," rid'st thou in a buggy,
Or walk'st a horseback, when the ways are muggy,
A whistling waltzes to thy playful doggie?
Are all thy patients "*very bad*," or worse?
And dost thou always purge them—in the purse?
In Summer dost thou always rise at early dawn,
Or ere the matin star has yet withdrawn,
To note if to their tasks thy loitering hinds have gone;
Or dost thou dally in thy bed's embraces
Till morning-glories veil their modest faces,
And from on high Apollo's genial beams
Kiss the glad groves, fair fields and simpering streams?
When Borea's blasts around thy cottage seek
Unsheltered vagrants with demoniac shriek,
Dost thou not fancy them the ghosts ejected
Of *resurrected subjects* thou'st dissected,

And feel thyself not altogether well protected?

Hast thou yet found the perfect way to do it,
Id est, as alchemists long sought to shew it,
Done by the philo-sopher's potent stone,
That trick of touch to juggling Midas known ;
Or dost thou drudge still in the old hard way
That turns the plodder prematurely grey,
And with rheumatiz racks the tenement of clay,
While silken scoundrels swell in sumptuous state,
Till, godless grown, they rouse avenging Fate ?

Dost scatter broadcast when thou sowest seed,
Or work a coulter-drill of forcing feed ?

Of all chaste Ceres' countless kinds of wheat,
Which dost thou hold hath least of smut and cheat ?

Wilt thou assume the shovel and the pick,
When Spring returns, and hie with Doctor Dick
To search for silver stores in far Montana,
Where, high on proud wings circling, eagles scan a
Wide waste precipitous of rock, and snow,
And ice-bound streams that ne'er or rarely flow,
And vasty heights, upheaved by Nature's hand,
That midst majestic wonders sovereign stand,
Defying might of braggart man, and Time,
To break the scepter of their bleak sublime.
There oft—as they who've witnessed well do know—
From thundering depths some sudden volcano
At night bursts forth, whose furious flames from high
Glare on the valleys, threat the vaulting sky ;
Raging, the lurid glories spreading rise,
Earth trembling reels and Night affrighted flies.

There Indian hordes, and other savages,
Commit the most heart-rending ravages,
As, from his inaccessible granite den,
Bruin beholds bold bands of mining men,

And, in anticipative banquet, sweet,
Bares his broad ivories to test the treat,
Licks his huge lips and smacks his ponderous jaws,
Then, roaring ravenous, springs his monstrous claws
To clutch— ha ! dost thou dodge ? Sure, thou hast cause.

Then, dare not thou the Fates by venturing there,
Lest thou shouldst *fall* acquainted with a bear,
Or “redskin devil,” bent on “raising hair ;”
Of such, discretion bids the wise beware.
How useless all his gathered ores to one

Who gratis gets a grave in Grizzly’s paunch !
Or, when the scalping-knife its work has done,
Can sumless wealth the streaming death-wound staunch ?
The disembodied spirit may not fly
With earthly treasures to the home on high ;
And, might it bear them to the world below,
Could it enjoy them *there*, where all is woe !

Then, seek not thou that arduous mountain-wild ;
But to plain competence be reconciled,
And still attend thy patients and thy farm,
With eye to see and heart to feel each charm
That Art and Nature lend the varied year,
Blest with love, home, and early friendships near.

While thus contented you resolve to live,
Montana’s ores but fancied good can give :
Yet, in your prayers remember one who there,
Beset by dangers, in an icy air,
By honest effort seeks that glittering fruit,
The love for which is evil’s pregnant root.

'Tis twenty years, and more, since last we met :—
Ah, many a bud of hope has bloomed, then died,
Fruitless, mid woman's tears and man's regret ;
Full many a faithful heart been sorely tried ;
Low humbled many a haughty son of pride ;
A deathly madness smitten all the land ;
Corruption's festering flood spread far and wide,
And trusted treason seized supreme command,
Since in the dear old home we clasped each other's hand

We're well, and trust that you and yours are, too ;
Accept our constant love, and so—adieu !

January, 1873.



—C^TO DR. R. J. S., E^SQ., K.Y.

Protean brother, all trades Jack at,
What is't thou hast not shown a knack at!

Mid scenes of sylvan beauty born,
When minstrel bird and fragrant thorn
With song and incense hailed the morn,
A Genius, fair and versatile,
Did on thy tree-hewn cradle smile,
And bade, with soul-inspiring eyes,
“Right onward speed and upward rise !”

That “man is never satisfied,”
In you is well exemplified ;
And we admit your aptness all in,
Except, perhaps, your latest callin’,
In which—had nothing yet to read,
We’re not prepared to mete your meed,
Yet think, as *usual* you’ll succeed ;
At least, you have our worded wishes
That you’ll be whale(d?) amongst the fishes.

Most difficult of all your doing,
And lie-able to misconstruing,
You’ll find your present task of writin’
A heedless public to enlighten ;
And editorial tittle-tattle
Of crops and swine and biped cattle
Will sure provoke an inky battle ;
For editors are but a butt
Whereat each other slings his smut ;
Almost as vain as petty poet,
Combative quite as William Go-at,

When naughty boys him do throw at,
They scrawl and brawl and charge about,
In fierce invective savage stout.

Though sheets of excellent advice
You pen, *smart* typos in a trice,
By changing words and punctuation,
Can with them play the very “’nation,”
And make their writer seem as stupid
As maudlin lover snubbed by Cupid.
But, if your lucid piece be set
Exact, what honor shall you get?
Some envious ed. may hint you stole
It from some musty pigeon hole,
And, though the charge be proved a lie,
You’re injured in the vulgar eye:
Another, garbled or entire,
As suits convenience or desire,
Will reproduce it as his own,
Quotation points nor credit shown,
Then bid his satellites admire.

Some papers mostly advertise,
And cram the crowd with cunning lies
To help humbugging rascals rise,
Whom *they* term “men of enterprise:”
Others play “*shrewd*” at politics,
That game unmatched for knavish tricks,
And soon become ambition’s tools,
Bribed to betray the “honest fools.”
And what care they how great the harm
They do? They’re *paid*,—ah, that’s the charm
Yet few rebuke, though many see;
So cowed, or much corrupt, are we.

Kind, thoughtful friend, blame not the line
 That mourns our country's swift decline !
 But *yesterday*, so great, so fair,
 Might none of Earth with her compare :
 Her sons were sovereigns, every one,
 None nobler ever viewed the sun :
 Proud magnates thronged from every land,
 To offer wreaths, to kiss her hand :
 She frowned,—high monarchs bowed them, sad ;
 She smiled,—and all the world was glad.
 And *now* ! her moral grandeur gone,
 Broken her bower, her beauty wan,
 Her white robe rent, and darkly stained
 By conquest o'er her virtue gained ;
 A mongrel monster's paramour,
 She sinks and sins with open door,
 While friends lament her ruined fame,
 And foes rejoicing point her shame.
 Nor may she hope, *impenitent*,
 To know the peace, the pure content,
 That weeping Magdalena felt,
 When at the Savior's feet she knelt,
 Released from sin's oppressive weight,
Forgiven ! for her love was great :
But who forgives remorseless hate !

May due success, and health* renewed,
 With such delight as rectitude
 Of heart pours on the dreaming eye,
 Attend your onward way,—Goodbye !

January 1873.

* He was then suffering from a severe infliction.

With a Returned "Picture-Prize Ticket,"

To —— ART Co.

Gentlemen:—

The pen may plan some bare outline;
The brush must robe that rigid form
In pliant colors, fair and warm,
To vivify the cold design:
So impecuniosity,
With idly vain verbosity,
May show an impotent desire
For beauties only wealth can gain,—
Those "gems," of pictured land or main,
Aglow with fancy's genial fire:
Hence *must* I,—churlish though it seem
To *thus* repay your marked esteem,
Which by the proffered "prize" I learn—
For lack of cash significate
To *win*, your "gift" certificate
With baren thanks to you return,
Whereby, which *is* a little hard,
Poet and painter miss reward.

February, 1878.

FLORA'S QUEST.

WRITTEN IN MISS ANNA B. B—'S ALBUM.

Once, for prize to bring
Her twin sister, Spring,
Lovely Flora went a Maying,
Over many a region straying,
Many a mead, and vale, and mountain,
Glowing garden, fairy fountain,
Searched to find a *fadeless* flower ;
Vainly still in shine and shower
Sought—not yet in *Anna's* bower.

“ I will go,”—she said
With uplifted head—
“ Go where *other* flowers are blooming
Fair as these, as unassuming,
Those that, in themselves uniting
Every virtue, love inviting,
Blest beyond all *I* can dower,
Well may show some *fadeless* flower ;
Hence I go to *Anna's* bower.”

1878.

RETROSPECTIVE.

Let us weave a rhyme by memory's rays,
A changeful chime for our vernal days,
When as mountain snow our souls were white,
Our hearts as light as the fountain's flow.

Then was *our* world young, and all day long
The gay scenes rung with our laughing song ;
Then still, in dreams, mid the wildwood shade
We roamed and playcd, or angled the streams.

Thus childhood's hours, like the morning dew,
And its purple flowers, in freshness flew ;
Then a maiden fair and youth drew nigh,
Danced lovingly by, pursued by—Care !

Ah, never more shall our sad steps know
That Ednely shore of long ago !
For, though age yearns for the youthful clime,
On track of Time never train returns.

PROSPECTIVE.

Shall we never again youth's raptures know,
That sinless strain of the long ago ?
Shall we meet no more that loving band
Of the memory land our hearts deplore ?

There *is* a blest clime,—where angels dwell,
Where changeful Time, where the mournful knell,
Sadden no soul and wither no form,
Nor cloud and storm o'er the region roll.

There seraphs combine with saints to sing
Of the divine redeemer and king ;
But those fair scenes bloom distant away,
We widely stray, and death intervenes.

When the tristful tide is ferried o'er,
With Faith, far-eyed, at the guiding oar,
In the sinless land then souls may gree
At the Savior's feet, His ransomed band.

1875.



DIVES.

What is earthly grandeur ? fleeting—
Like the smiles of foemen, greeting—
Like the joys of lovers, meeting—
When fate impends.

By a mansion gate a lonely
Lazar dies ; over him, only
An angel bends.

In that mansion, sounds of sighing,
Praying priest, and woman crying ;
Lo ! its lord lies dying, dying
Mid mourning friends.

Swiftly sped on flery pinions
Deep down to the dread dominions
A soul descends.

Weeping, there, and hopeless wailing,
Keen Remorse his prey assailing,
Penitence now unavailing
To stay the fiends.

Guilty gains and godless pleasures,
Folly-heaped in carnal measures,
Bring like amends.

IMPROMPTU.

ON AWAKENING FROM SLEEP, MIDNIGHT, JANUARY, 1873.

A strange unrest pervades my soul,
A longing, never felt before,
As if to cross the waves that roll
 And break upon that destined shore,
Where time and death have no control,
 And tempted weakness sins no more.



THE FALL.

I.

Where blooms the magnolia, grand,
By the manifold river, that flows
Enrichingly through the bright land,
Our hill-crowning city arose ;
She was famed to the empires of Earth,—
To the vassals of Winter and Night ;
These slandered her generous worth,
All envied her freedom and light.

II.

As thunderclouds gathering show
A war of the elements nigh,
The marshalling force of the foe
Gave warning to fight or to fly :
To fly, we disdained, yet to fight
At such odds seemed but flight to the grave ;
For their legions arrayed every height,
Their monitors blackened the wave.

III.

As the victim that serpents have bound
With their coils in a crushing inclose,
Was our city, beleagured around
By hosts of implacable foes :
Our servile submission, or death,
They demanded with insolence high,—
Our gun with impetuous breath
Hurled back a defiant reply.

IV.

Then instant with venomous dash
Their musketry arguments fell,
While their crashing artillery's flash
Urged the heavier logic of Hell :
Thus in deadly debating were borne
Many days down adversity's flood,
Till the city in ruins lay torn,
And the ruins cemented with blood

V.

Then, our stores spent by ravage and use,
Our defenders few, famishing, maimed,
Calamity counseled a truce,
And hence was surrender proclaimed :—
O Freedom, thy banner of yore
Be thy *shroud*—tear the wreath from thy brow!
For thy *spirit* then fled from our shore,
And thy *symbols* are mockery now.

1879.



VIRGINIA MOCKING-BIRD.

A MAYTIME REVERY.

VOICES { *Rustic.*
 Birds.
 Echo.

SCENE--In the West. A clearing in a forest; plain farmhouse, partly surrounded by grove of fruit and timber trees; kitchen and flower garden, on fence of which leans aged Rustic, looking up at a Mocking-bird on cherry tree.

RUSTIC.

Bird of the elegant form, but plain coat,
Wandering rapturist, music-devote,
Many toned melodist, prime in degree,
Every bird's carol yields tribute to thee.
Sweet are thy songs in the concert of Spring,
Precious remembrances they ever bring,—
Ghosts of young pleasures, heart-treasures of yore,
Friendship to value and love to adore,
Haunting lone age to the ultimate shore.

Visitant, rare to the chill-breathing West,
While thou art rocking on cherry-tree crest,
Say, whence thy free wafting, whither thy quest?

BIRD.

Inquisitive *senior*, attend the reply:—
We're roamers, my downy wing Fleetie and I,
From the coralline strand of a wonderful land
Of soft-spreading valleys and mountains sublime;

Where, as bountiful now as from Deity's hand,
 Nature exults in perennial prime ;
 Where, vocal his lute in voluptuous bower,
 Love is a lord of invincible power ;
 Where, nightly in redolent garden and grove,
 Quaint little fairy-folks fanciful rove,
 Or, down in the dell where the moss-carpet springs,
 Dance to the melodies *Merribird** sings,
 Till Chanticleer shrill
 Warns from afar,
 As the matinal star
 Beacons the hill.

To your vast-reaching valley we glance with the beam
 That arrays its broad landscapes in beauty supreme ;
 And we come on a leisurely visiting tour
 To cousins that with you rude winter endure,
 And by many a chirruping ditty allure
 Of slow-coming Summer and harvest to dream.

RUSTIC.

Welcome enthusiast, say,
 In the clime of thy favorite stay,
 Amid brightness and bloom
 And balmy perfume,—
 In those lands of abounding delight,
 Does *poverty*'s plaint ever sound,—
 Is *might* ever throned over right,—
 In their bowers is serpent *guile* found,—
 Ever heard is the dull-moaning *knell*,—
 Transitive chorister, tell !

* The Mocking-bird, of which at least one species, the Louisiana, is a charming night chanter.

BIRD.

Now why have you bid me my gladness depress ?

Though so lovely and grand is that radiant land,
And so favored is life in its bounteous clime,
That nations might well there in harmony dwell,
Nor blot with a crime the fair record of time ;
Yet is *man*, even there, as unwise as elsewhere,
As sensual, covetous, prone to oppress,
As servile, as haughty, and all in excess.

Mid the Tropical glow or the gloom of the Pole,

If prosperity bless or adversity curse,
In his heart is a canker, a cloud on his soul,
For his earthly estate is an heirdom perverse.
As a despot or slave, as the dupe or the knave,
He creeps from his cradle to grope to his grave ;
Then, if worship of wealth was his service and boast,
What final view guerdons his lingering ghost ?
Lo ! heirs and attorneys, these human hyenas,
Fight over his hoard in judicial arenas,
While kindred, in amity dwelling before,
By lucre made foes, are estranged evermore,

Must I still the sad prospect pursue ?

Ah, ever and everywhere view
Penury's hut by the palace of pride,—
Tyranny's myrmidons ravaging wide,—
Lily-souled purity perfidy's prey,—
Graveyards and mourners in ghastly array ;
These are the pictures humanity

Crowds on the canvas of history,
Scenes of a tragic insanity

Grouped in a drama of mystery ;
Sombre these sketches, but true.
Pensive inquirer, adieu !

RUSTIC.

Moralist—*satirist*, hold !
 A moment thy ready wing fold
 In a parting less dreary and cold :
 O, sing me again in a happier strain,
 Or evermore tuneless and moody remain !

BIRD.

If my best notes may soothe a sore heart,
 The descant shall briefly impart
 What was heard from a chapel, one day,
 As near it I happened to stray,—
 The windows were open, for fair
 Was that Sabbath and fragrant the air :—

“ Could the doubter explore, like the prophet * sublime,
 ‘The valley of vision, the sealed book of time,’
 Life’s mystery, then, less involved might appear,
 God’s providence plainer, His presence more near,
 And His chastening love but in *seeming* severe.
Enough, that the conscious soul feels He is *just*,
 Awarding the worker, if perishing dust,
 Or essence immortal, all recompense due,
 According as *purpose* and *action* are true.
 Hence, the prudent still flourish, the foolish decay :
 Hence, while *doubt* stands to cavil, *faith* speeds the right way.
 What is *faith*? but the answer of conscience within,
 True reason rebuking arch-sophister sin.
 Faith leads to repentance—reform—and the Lord ;
 Thus faith is election—a work—a reward,—
 Reward even now in this world ;
 For, though Satan’s black banner unfurled
 Embattle his legions to scath,

* Isaiah.

Secure in the care of eternal Control
 Faith's children shall dwell, ever tranquil and whole,—
 Like a rock-guarded isle mid the menacing roll
 Of Ocean upheaved by the hurricane's wrath.
 O, if faith even here can such comfort bestow,
 What bliss shall the faithful in Paradise know !
 But no sin-loving spirit may hear
 The glad anthems that swell on that shore,
 Where the sainted in glory with angels adore.
 Then, O ye forlorn ! seek compassion and cheer
 Where seeking is gain,—of the life-giving Word.”

Turn !—attempt not to follow that luminous flight
 Up the sacred serene to the Fountain of light,
 Frail muse of the grove ! It became the divine,
 Yet, though gifted, to preach may become not the bird :
 But to merrily teach a melodious lore
 To musical vagrants, the minstrels of air ;
 To be patient and thankful, whatever the fare,
 Contented and cheery, and never repine
 For the things that accord not with Nature's design,—
 But ever beware of a snake* and a snare.

RUSTIC.

Now, versatile warbler, right welcome thy song,
 Benign with the adorant spirit of Spring :
 Delightful preceptor, thy lesson prolong,—
 Let garden and grove with thy rhapsody ring !

BIRD.

From our rose-curtained lodge hear my charmer now calling,
 “ Flit hither, my love ! ” further converse forestalling :
 And much I mistrust I can profit men aught ;
 For some are conceited, and will not be taught,
 And most would be flattered, not shown their defects,

**Snake* or *sneak*?—but they are synonymous.

While but few choose the mirror that truly reflects ;
 And in vain would my song with the selfish condole,
 For a hog harbors neither a conscience nor soul,
 And *hogs*, though politely termed *swine*, are they all
 That heed neither pity's nor honesty's call.

Now, Fleetie, dear Fleetie ! I hasten to you :—

[*Flies, and alights on a spray of the nest-bearing rosebush.*.]

Sing tirrity lirrity, rury aroo !

Right merry is May

When hither we stray.

SHE (*From within*).

For we come with the splendor, abide with the bloom.

HE.

But sad is the year
 When *we* disappear.

SHE.

For we go with its glory, evanish from gloom.

HE.

When her gay Spring and gorgeous adorning
 Are faded, and Flora soon going,
 Takes tribute of woodbine and clover ;
 When Summer grows earnest and glowing,
 And songless are Evening and Morning ;
 When *darlings* on full wing are flying,
 Our cousinly pleasures over,
 And sighing is final good-bye-ing,—

BOTH.

Then away, away on the wing of the rover !

HE.

Where, from their fay-guarded fountains

High on the snow-hooded mountains,
Streams lovingly flow
Along vistas enchantingly beaming ;
Where Time is a loiterer, dreaming ;
Where evergreen groves and savannas
Their wealth of ambrosial ananas
And oranges grow,—

BOTH.

There we tunefully gliding will go !

ECHO (*From the forest.*)
Glidingly go-o !

May, 1878.



CONCLUSION.

Blossoms and birds!—the poesy of Spring,
Herself a poem, truer, lovlier far
And more divine, than ever mortal muse
In inspiration's happiest hour conceived,—
The soul regardless of their gentle charms,
In every sense is dead to harmony
And beauty, dead to every genuine joy,
Beyond all hope of resurrection, dead!

Winter, severe, and of protracted reign,
Abruptly now foregoes our ravaged zone,
And genial Spring, with daisied step, and smile
Beaming of heaven, at once proceeds to deck
The scene with leaf and bloom, and gladden man
With promise of abounding fruitfulness.
Nor her sole retinue the floral train,
Silently charming, but innumerable sounds,
Of the winged world in varied melody,
Enchant the quickened landscapes all around.
Her trusty harbinger, Frank Robin, came
Erewhile, reminding thankless, faithless man
Of the old covenant with patriarch Noah;
And now from far lands, ever-vernant, all

Her airy choirs with greeting notes return.
Welcome, gay vagrants ! though mere summer friends,
In censure phrase some cynic minds, too sour
Themselves for friendship's sweet devotedness,
Miscall your migratory tribes, because
You shun the shock of ruffian Winter's rage,
And adverse fare, and even this by Boor,
That stench of slinking sordidness, begrudged
The few less volant birds that here abide.
To man, too oft your jailor and your fate,
You owe few songs of kindliness or thanks ;
For not by him, but Providence, you live.
What if sometimes your brooding nest you build
Near by his dwelling, trusting there the hawk
Dare not molest, and though perhaps the man
May love and would protect your confidence,
And so inspires his own susceptive young,
Yet even then how seldomly unharmed
By sneaking lout, insidious snake or cat,
You rear your family till safely fledged !
I hence, though loth, advise you rather trust
The wilderness for niding-place, although
Some trouble there may chance, as periled less
Than man's vicinity, which proves, alike
As foe or friend, malign to innocence.

Dear fugitives ! of you my verse began,
Amid the flowers and you, my verse shall sigh
Its final note ; but not my last adieu
To the loved themes : for when, as soon must be,
My weary form reclines in longed repose
In some reclusive, tranquil nook, untrod
By eager gain's insatiate herd, where boughs
O'erwave and pebbly streamlet sings, with none,

Of all that live, but one companion heart,
Long tried and true, to ever rest by mine,
Yet even then methinks my very dust
Will there rejoice with Spring's delightful train,
Her incense-wafting flowers and tuneful birds.

May 4th, 1881.









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